

A Psychoanalysis of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* in Terms of Cathy Caruth's Theory PTSD

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Abstract

The field of psychoanalysis is an enormous domain to study and analyze related literary works especially in the genre of psychic trauma as this of close connection with the nature of human beings. Accordingly, the modern American theorist Cathy Caruth (b.1955) endows the psychoanalytic theories with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder theory (PTSD) in which the focus is on the revelation of trauma after passing with a period of experience in which there are editing, filtering, inserting imagination, metaphorical expressions, using defensive mechanism, and alike.

The American dramatist Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) is the sample of this study in which the character of Willy Loman, a salesman, is the case on which Caruth's PTSD is studied. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyze the character of the protagonist psychologically in terms of the main symptoms or principles of the selected theory. The major line of the study is based on several questions including: (1) What are the main principles of Caruth's theory found in the selected play? (2) How far is the protagonist depicted with the sample theory? (3) Is there a connection between the chosen play and the depended theory? In significance, this paper is expected to serve the field of literature by dealing with the art of drama and the field of psychology by focusing on the mentioned theorist and her theory, as well as it shows the connection between those two fields. Structurally, the study begins with an introduction illustrating the theorist and her theory on the one hand and the playwright and his play, on the other hand. Then it analyses the play according to the chosen theory. The conclusion sums up the main findings.

Keywords: Cathy Caruth, PTSD, Flashback, Suicide, Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*.

تحليل نفسي لمسرحية موت بائع متجول لآرثر ميلر وفقاً لنظرية اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة

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الخلاصة

يعد مجال التحليل النفسي مجالاً هائلاً لدراسة وتحليل الأعمال الأدبية ذات الصلة وخاصة في نوع الصدمات النفسية، لما لذلك من ارتباط وثيق بطبيعة البشر. وفقاً لذلك، زودت المنظرة الأمريكية الحديثة كاثي كاروث (مواليد 1955) نظريات التحليل النفسي بنظرية اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة التي ينصب التركيز فيها على الكشف عن أو استرجاع الصدمة بعد اجتيازها لفترة من الخبرة التي يتم فيها تحرير، تصفية وإدخال الخيال والتعبيرات المجازية باستخدام آلية دفاعية و ماثابه.

عينة هذه الدراسة هي مسرحية موت بائع متجول (1949) للكاتب المسرحي الأمريكي آرثر ميلر والتي تكون فيها شخصية ويلي لومان، البائع، هي الحالة التي عليها تدرس نظرية اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة لكاروث. لذلك، فإن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل شخصية البطل نفسياً وفقاً لأعراض أو مبادئ النظرية المختارة. يعتمد الخط الرئيسي للدراسة على عدة أسئلة منها: (1) ما هي المبادئ الرئيسية لنظرية كاروث الموجودة في المسرحية المختارة؟ (2) إلى أي مدى يتم تصوير البطل وفقاً للنظرية؟ (3) هل هناك علاقة بين المسرحية المختارة والنظرية المعتمدة؟ في الأهمية، من المتوقع أن تخدم هذه الورقة مجال الأدب من خلال التعامل مع فن

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الدراما، ومجال علم النفس من خلال التركيز على المنظرة المذكورة ونظريتها، وكذلك توضح هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين هذين المجالين. من الناحية التركيبية، تبدأ الدراسة بمقدمة توضح كاروث ونظريتها من جهة، والكاتب المسرحي ومسرحيته من ناحية أخرى. ثم تحلل المسرحية وفقاً للنظرية المختارة. يلخص الاستنتاج النتائج الرئيسية.

الكلمات الدالة: كاثي كاروث، اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة، الارتجاج، الانتحار، آرثر ميلر، موت بائع متجول.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Caruth's PTSD

1.1.1 An Overview on PTSD

Everly, Jr. and Lating (1995) refer to the history of the term PTSD in which reactions dated back to the 6th century B.C. within the context of warfare. Such responses were documented in the 17th century A.D. in response to civilian tragedies like train disasters and large fires. But, as they illustrate, the systematic appearance of the term was traced to the year 1980 when the concept entered into the official psychiatric nosology (American Psychiatric Association)[1]. They also explain that the meaning of 'psychotraumatology' can be defined as "the study of psychological trauma; more specifically, the study of the processes and factors that lie (a) antecedent to, (b) concomitant with, and (c) subsequent to psychological traumatization"[1,p.4]. According to the principles of this field however, the study of psychological trauma is far more than just the study of PTSD. The former is, for example, the immediate death phenomenon, whereas the latter stands for the most severe and solid form of human stress.

Cathy Caruth (b. 1955) is a modern American theorist of trauma in the closing years of the twentieth century. Trauma, as Reisberg and Hertel indicate, means here "a psychic injury, especially one caused by emotional shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed" [2, p.78]. In a similar context, Vasile provides a number of definitions of the concept including a violent emotion affecting an individual to the point of abnormality, and an event in which a traumatized victim produces an unbalance at the psychic level [3,pp.781–785]. However, Caruth (1995) in her introduction to *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* shows that psychic trauma involves intensive personal suffering and it also embraces the recognition of realities most individuals have not begun to encounter, acknowledging that 'Posttraumatic Stress Disorder' (PTSD) includes the symptoms of what was already called by the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856- 1939) shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis [4]. In this scope, Freud advocated in 1890s that hysteria occurs to individuals as a result of psychological trauma[5]. He also focused on the soldiers of WWI who had the symptoms of shell shock, fear, weeping, crying, forgotten memory, and inactivity [6]. In the words of Caruth, most definitions of PTSD share the same target in the following definition:

[T]here is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event [4,p.4].

This definition reflects that the traumatic situation may not be painful in the same degree to everyone but it depends on several personal attitudes attached to it.

According to Caruth, PTSD must be understood as a symptom of the unconscious and of history. The traumatized individuals possess a history within them. To identify trauma in terms of history, the theorist proclaims that:

History was taking place with no witness: it was also the very circumstances of being inside the event that made unthinkable the very notion that a witness could exist. ... the historical imperative to bear witness could essentially not be met during the actual occurrence [4.p.7].

Once more, Caruth explains that PTSD or what is called historical trauma is the trauma "in which the overwhelming events of the past repeatedly possess, in intrusive images and thoughts, the one who has lived through them" [4, p.151]. In this case, it does not mean a record of the past only but an enrollment of an experience that is not yet fully accumulated. Hence, this impact demands historical awareness and denial of usual modes that access to it. In addition, the most striking feature of traumatic recollection, as she keeps on, is that it is not "a simple memory" [4.p.151].

In addition, Caruth [4] observes that trauma presupposes a tie to an image or event; it cannot be regarded as a malformation of reality, or gives an unconscious meaning to a fact it seeks to avoid, or a destruction of what once was in favor. In the same scope, she refers to the article of Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart entitled "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma" the two authors write that "complete recovery" can only take place when "the story can be told, the person can look back at what happened; he has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality" [4,p.176].

In her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Caruth (1996) follows Freud in describing trauma as "a break in the mind's experience of time" [7,p. 61]. As she asserts, the tendency in trauma victims by filtering "the original" through "the fictions of traumatic repression" lets the trauma available "at best indirectly" [7, pp. 15-16]. She also explains the term "trauma" as a wound of an overwhelming violent experience that people suffer through sudden and out of controlled circumstances. In addition, the theorist observes the repetition of posttraumatic dreams as an attempt to "master what was never fully grasped in the first place" [7,p.62]. She also reflects trauma as an experience or event so painful that the mind is unable to cope with.

In order to shed light on PTSD in detail, Bistoën, Vanheule and Craps [8] explain that the term was included as a new diagnostic category in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III; American Psychiatric Association, 1980) in 1980. The DSM adopts a restrictive approach to the stressor by defining a set of requirements that an event must meet in order to be acknowledged as traumatic. A study of the history of the concept of psychic trauma reveals that PTSD in DSM-III puts conditions including: "the relative contribution of the event and the characteristics of the person as etiological factors in favor of the event" [8, pp.669-670].

Generally and formally, the symptoms of PTSD, as listed by Van der Kolk and Van der Hart and referred to in Caruth [4] are measured by a number of psychological phenomena that appear after the traumatic event. This includes that symptoms appear within three months of the traumatic event or later with a difference from an individual to another. A mature traumatized individual can reveal the trauma in flashbacks, bad dreams, frightening thoughts, thoughts or feelings related to the trauma, feeling of tense, difficulty in sleeping, key features of the traumatic event, negative thoughts about oneself or the world, loss of interest in enjoyable activities, and alike. Therefore, it is the psychic case that arises out of the experience of trauma of painful event.

1. 1. 2 Flashback as a Means of Trauma Revelation

Flashbacks are mainly regarded as painful past memories that grow from the conflict between the tendency to forget and the insistence of remembering. In this case, the past reverts repeatedly and intensively through flashbacks in forms including auditory, visual and sensory hallucinations, dreams, and alike. Flashbacks are not new

thoughts but recollections of the past that destroy the present and reproduce traumatic events [9]. Here, flashback can be defined as a "narrative reversion to previous events" [10, p.189].

Caruth [4] states that the flashback that is used for the revelation by the traumatized person may provide a form of recall that the victim encounters in a form of memories or a series of conscious thought. As individuals of trauma relive the reality of the past, they live in it through recapturing a past that accomplishes consciousness only through refusing active recollection. By doing this, the past trauma in flashback cannot be an overwhelming experience only but it is partially constituted by its inability to integrate with consciousness. Actually, the realistic side of the traumatic situation resides in the comprehension of the victim. The flashback or new revelation can convey the truth and additional interpretations. However, filtering the trauma into a narrative memory in which the event is revealed and communicated reduces the validity and intensity that depicts traumatic recall depending on the previous knowledge of the victim, as Caruth [4] keeps on. This leads to many complex struggles such as the desire to avoid the past trauma within remembering, trying to be away of the trauma by not remembering, and selecting traumatic incidents of the past through flashbacks.

In addition, Caruth indicates that "the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" [7,p.7]. The crisis and inability of the individual to integrate closely with the incident constitute the case that reads: "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it" [4, p.4]; the aftermath of a belated trauma passes away between the real event and the appearance of the symptoms, creating a disconnected place where the outside tends to interfere with the inside, as Caruth clarifies. This recalls Freud's concept of "Nachträglichkeit" [11,p.259] that means latency or "afterwardness" in which the impact of the psychic shock is experienced after a period of time [12, p.118].

1. 1. 3 Suicidal Behavior in PTSD

Suicide is known as an intentional destruction of the self. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1985), the term is defined as "the act or an instance of intentionally killing oneself" [qtd. in 13, p.99]. In the same regard, Durkheim defines the phenomenon as a case "applied to any death which is the direct or indirect result of a positive or negative act accomplished by the victim himself" [14,p.42]. Perhaps, as Aleem points out that one seeks suicide to attain relief from miserable or unbearable situations, and deciding suicide either for a sudden unpleasant incident or a well-planned decision. Thus, there must be the idea of death with the intention of self-destructive behavior [15].

In his study of suicide, Rahman [16] refers to the meaning of the concept to Freud who shows that in every human being there is a desire to continue living and there is also a tendency to die. Accordingly, seeking suicide is found in the subconscious mind of every individual. Rahman also pinpoints examples of ancient suicide in history including that of the Greek philosopher Socrates (399 BC) by having a cup of poison as a matter of self-destruction in reaction to the orders and wishes of the Greek emperor. The researcher also points out that though suicide is cowardly act, it can be for a noble cause including one's own country, language, religion or political faith [16].

In the same regard, Caruth indicates that:

In modern trauma theory as well, there is an emphatic tendency to focus on the destructive repetition of the trauma that governs a person's life. As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration.... The postulation of a

drive to death... would seem only to recognize the reality of the destructive force that the violence of history imposes on the human psyche, the formation of history as the endless repetition of previous violence [7,p.63].

Depending on the above explanations, Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is the sample of this study.

1.2 Miller's *Death of a Salesman*: An Introduction

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) is regarded as one of the greatest American dramatists of the 20th century. His best dramatic career includes *All My Sons* (1947), *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953) and *A View from the Bridge* (1955)[17]. The original title of *Death of a Salesman* was "The Inside of His Head". The author was rewarded for this play with the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Drama Critics Award, Antoinette Perry Award, Theatre Club Award and others [18]. The play mainly deals with the thread of the human psyche realistically in which the conflict is linear and the trauma is revealed later after a long experience of the protagonist, Willy Loman.

The plot of the play tells the story of Willy Loman, a sixty three years old travelling salesman between Brooklyn and New England. He cannot fulfill his ambitions. As defensive mechanism by him, he resorts to flashback with some illusionary images in order to obtain dignity and comfort. However, he encounters some barriers in achieving his dreams that seem illogical in the real world. In fact, he is unable to realize the actual situation of his family that consists of his wife, Linda, and his two sons, Biff and Happy. Furthermore, his feeling of the responsibility of the failure of his two sons especially the elder, Biff, and his being fired from his job by Howard, his boss, increase the traumatic situation. Accordingly, Willy commits a suicide to be worth of his family by providing them with the insurance money that can solve their financial problems and to start a new beginning. Structurally, the play consists of two acts with a 'Requiem' and it is about the last twenty four hours of the protagonist's life. It starts in the post- traumatic stress disorder of Willy, i. e. the revelation of trauma after passing long or historical experiences.

To follow the sequences of the plot, Miller recounts in the "Introduction" of the text that:

The play grew from simple images... . It grew from images of futility... convoluted discussions, wonderments, arguments, belittlements, encouragements, fiery resolutions, abdications, returns, partings... tremendous opportunities... . The images of aging and so many of your friends already gone... . The image of the son's hard, public eye upon you, no longer swept by your myth, no longer reusable from his separateness, no longer knowing you have lived for him and have wept for him... . The image of people turning into strangers who only evaluate one another [19,p.29].

As is obvious from the title of *Death of a Salesman*, the protagonist will die. This is expressed by the playwright himself:

... I'm in the process of believing that maybe men do live by images more than one suspected before, that despite themselves, and unknowingly, they behave according to some artistic or esthetic ideas which they are not even aware they have digested [20,p.35].

The following discussion deals with the analysis of the posttraumatic stress disorder of Willy Loman that theoretically based on the principles claimed by the theorist Caruth and accumulated after a long experience. It also focuses on 'flashbacks' as the main means of revelation and on Willy's suicide as a final destination of the protagonist's PTSD.

2. The Trauma of Willy: Revelation, Defensive Mechanism and Suicidal Actions

In his "Introduction" to his *Plays*, Miller illustrates his intention in writing *Death of a Salesman* as:

The first image that occurred to me... of an enormous face the height of the proscenium arch which would appear and then open up, and we would see the inside of a man's head...for the inside of his head is a mass of contradictions [19,p.23].

The dramatist introduces Willy as an ambitious salesman who does not break in driving. However, the protagonist is characterized by failure; and, hence, he eventually stops his life by his own hands. He is a sample of the mental disorder in which he experiences social isolation, random flashbacks, repetitions of the traumatic event as this expressed by Caruth that "[t]o be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" [4, pp.4-5]. Among the symptoms of PTSD that can also be attributed to Willy are the random re-experiencing of the incident, the avoidance of remembering painful memories especially that of severe problems in social, occupational, or those of everyday life.

Willy's character is confusing. This salesman has two personalities: one as a tired man in his sixties; the other is seen in his flashback as a young well-liked man. However, he represents an ordinary human being who has mundane dreams of obtaining good job, wealth, familial life, and acceptance of his community. In his introduction, Miller shows that dreaming is obvious in the play as "an air of the dream clings to the place, a dream rising out of reality" [12,I,p.5].

Traumatic reality can be felt when Willy, in the first act, returns home out of control, explaining to his wife, Linda, what has happened to him in his drive to Yonkers and how he has gone off the road. He talks with her about the nostalgic times when he was a salesman, capable of doing anything. Such comparison between the past and the present overwhelms the protagonist and puts him in conflicts concerning his experience:

I'm tellin' ya, I absolutely forgot I was driving If I'd've gone the other way over the white line I might've killed somebody. So I went on again - and five minutes later I'm dreamin' again, and I nearly... I have such, I have such strange thoughts [21, I, p.8].

The man is displeased of the people around as they try to avoid and neglect him. This is shown when he expresses his disgust of them to his wife: "people don't seem to take to me...I don't know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I'm not noticed" [21, I, p.25]. Hence, Willy cannot cope the contemporary times and he continues in his belief of an idea that one can succeed in the business world with nothing more than a good appearance. In other words, he is a salesman and to be like this is the lowest job in the society. His focus becomes on the value of looking and physical appearance by emphasizing being liked rather than being a good person:

The man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want. You take me, for instance. I never have to wait in line to see a buyer [21, I,p.23].

In his life, Willy suffers the loss of his identity and social position. He is a failure father. He faces external and inner critical conditions including poverty, distorted images, despair and hopelessness. His flashback, narrative stories, and active memory mixing with imagination are working together in his mind to reveal his historical trauma of experience. He presently suffers his hardship life and intends to retreat into the past to escape traumatic situations. We see him firstly laps off into the past when he faces his son Biff who has been away of home for a year. This reflects the father's disappointment

of his elder son in life. Therefore, the play generally illuminates the experience of trauma victims. It also mirrors the dilemma of Willy's disoriented and imbalanced mind that constitutes the process of revelation of events.

Willy struggles to escape the dilemma that has tortured him. Perhaps, part of his past time, he had a normal life out of his painful memories. In his present flashback, he reveals how his life was utterly transformed. He is obsessed by a traumatic secret of the past that has kept him from finding peace in his present life. This case can be seen in the words of Fredrickson as:

Repressed memories are pieces of your past that have become a mystery. They stalk your unconscious and hamper your life with their aftermath. They will tell you a story if you know how to listen to them, and the story will help you to make sense of your life and your pain.[...] you must piece together mind and body clues to find out what you have forgotten. You will struggle at first to believe what you remembering, but your healing will take place as you recover your memories [22,p.24].

As protective mechanism, he tries to infer defensive reactions to some past painful memories in order to overcome them. To cheer himself up and to forget any unwanted memories, for instance, he escapes into a time when things were better for his family as he was able to deal with the problems they encountered. Due to this, Willy's refusal of the real world is so intense that in his mind he returns back in time to re-experience joyful days of his life. At that time, the financial aspects were less of a burden and his sons enthusiastically welcomed their father when he came back home from a long road trip:

I been wondering why you polish the car so careful. Ha! Don't leave the hubcaps, boys. Get the chamois to the hubcaps....Soon as you finish the car, boys. I wanna see ya I got a surprise for you, boys [21,I,p.19].

Some of Willy's memories are revealed in a form of disconnected images of his life experiences that are systematically stored in his mind and rather chronologically recalled. In this context, the situation of the hotel woman is the best example. To live as a well-liked person, the salesman creates in his imaginary world a woman, Miss Francis, whom he really lived an affair with her. Her function at this moment is to entertain him, "You do make me laugh" [21, I,p.27], he expresses; and thus, he has felt so much that he is "a wonderful man" [21,I, p.27]. The other significance, as Squires points out, is to remind him of his illegal affair with her and his betrayal of his wife when he gives her Linda's stockings as a gift. This matter is of a great psychic torture to Willy and is considered as the reason of the long rift between him and Biff as the latter does not give the respect for his father because of this incident in which he has discovered him in an illegal affair [23]. As a result, Biff has left his schooling study and the house. The father, in return, has blamed himself for his son's failure. Further, he cannot forget Biff's denouncement of him during the dinner scene "You fake! You phony little fake!" [21,II, p.32].

Willy's memories are regarded to be actual, representations of the past, and unchanged throughout the years in his mind. His pass of time provides these memories with unclear images of what he has already faced to the extreme that they are interwoven with his imagination and illusion. In this regard, the protagonist escapes the reality of the failure of his two sons by portraying them as stars or great persons, especially in comparison with their next door boy, Bernard. He penetrates in this image to the edge that he relates them with a mythological figure "Adonises" [21,I,p.23]. This speech illuminates Willy's attitude:

Bernard can get the best marks in school, y'understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y'understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him. That's why I thank Almighty God you're both built like Adonises [21,I, p. 23].

Here, the father does not only reveal his ignorance of the business world of Bernard but also reflects his two sons are like the handsome of all Greek males, Adonises. Furthermore, Willy is displaced in a literal and metaphorical sense; he lacks filial and social attentions. He has to master his relationships by narrating his past positions, remembering and constructing the past trauma. In the past, he was a successful salesman. But his chance in the new business is weak. Thus, his mood of living the past never prevents his ability to realize the present; for instance, his speech to his sons, "there'll be open sesame for all of us, 'cause one thing boys: I have friends. I can

park my car in any street...and the cops protect it like their own" [21,I, p.21]. Thus, in the case of Willy, as John Sue explains that:

In sharing memories of the past, the residents not only recall their places of origin but create a collective defined by these individual memories. The past, in other words, is used to forge a communal space in the present.... [P]laces serve as a guide for ethics because the memories they contain identify the inhabitants with a community and make them feel responsible for it [24, pp. 594-5].

Willy cannot accept himself as a successful person with greatness in reality [25]. This matter causes great trauma to him. For example, when he goes to his boss, Howard, the owner of the Wagner Company, to ask for less travel time, more home time and more wages, he believes that the young boss will grant his wish, especially since Willy named the man when he was born. Unfortunately, the salesman only gets disappointment; his boss, fires him; he turns hopeless and goes to his only true friend and neibougher, Charley, for comfort. In fact, although, the fired person knows that there will be no comfort found in Charley because the former has always been jealous of the latter. However, Charley tries to explain the reality to him:

Willy, when're you gonna'realize that them things don't mean anything? You named Howard, but you can't sell that. The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell. And the funny thing is that you're a salesman, and you don't know that [21,II, p.75].

The sense of meaning in Willy's life is based on achieving the approval of the people he engages with. As this cannot be achieved through his relationships with the others around him, he feels in despair and disappointment. In this circle, he lacks the respect and esteem of others including his sons. For instance, in the Restaurant scene, the father is neglected by his younger son, Happy, particularly, when he says to the girls "that's not my father. He's just a guy" [21,II, p.84].

Once more, in his flashback Willy seeks the admiration and friendship of his customers. This concept of success is personified, in particular, by two characters in the play: David Singleman and Ben Loman. The first is an old salesman, who could travel anywhere and give many orders by phone from his hotel- room. When this man died in his eighties, people came from everywhere to attend his funeral. This is the type of a man Willy admires and wants to be. This explains his selection of the salesmanship as a job for this typical figure stands for the shortest way of success. But nothing is achieved by Willy including success and crowded funeral. The second person in the protagonist's retrospect is his successful elder brother Ben who is another symbol of the ruthless success his brother tries to reach. In his consciousness, this model bridges the gap between fancy and reality. It is Ben's ways in the pursuit of gain that Willy wishes for himself and wants his sons to be. In fact, this figure, according to Willy is the man who went to the business world when he was seventeen and ended up rich when he was twenty one [23, pp.68-69]. Thus he is a symbol of rapid success, opposite of his brother who stays all his "life ringing up a zero"[21,II,p.92]. Willy's final illusionary conversation with his brother shows how much he desires the sentiments from his son, Biff, "that boy

will be thunderstruck, Ben, because he never realized-I am known! Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey-I am known, Ben and he'll see it with his eyes once and for all " [21,II,p.92]. Perhaps, the salesman sees his brother as a model to be achieved. Ben's departure and its significant role in the play are reviewed through flashback sequences of his brother only. Willy mentions to Ben as a reference to his purpose to end his life, "can you imagine that magnificence (Biff) with twenty-thousand dollars in his pocket?" [21,II, p.98].

In order to overcome his sense of marginalization and deterioration, he regards himself as a man of a personal value as he can provide his sons with a chance to achieve what he could not. Hence, "he convinces himself that only his death can restore his prominence in his family's eyes and retrieve for him his lost sense of honor," as Centola [26, p.41] declares. In this respect, he believes that he is worth more to his family and the world if he ends his life. These twenty thousand dollars are the amount of the benefit in his life insurance policy. Suddenly, Linda hears the car motor turn over, Willy guns the engine, the car squeals off down the street – then comes the sound of grinding steel and shattering glass. Even with his last action, his final attempt for something good for his family, Willy does not see the reality that he does not always get what he pays for [27].

It is important to shed light upon Mr. Loman, the absent dead father whose influence shows the main difference between him and his son, Willy, as this is one of the reasons of his psychic pain. This absent character is referred to through the illusionary conversation between Willy and Ben. Mr. Loman, the father, also affects the salesman's idea of success since he was a flute maker, who made and sold flutes by himself; and thus, he could financially support his family needs. That's why the sound of the flute in the play is a symbol for the past and brings pain in the present:

Willy: No, Ben! Please tell about Dad. I want my boys to hear....

Ben: Father was a very great and a very wild- hearted man.... And we'd stop in the towns and sell the flutes that he'd made on the way. Great inventor, Father. With one gadget he made more in a week than a man like you could make in a lifetime [21, I, p. 35]

Throughout the play, different interpretations are taken into the account for arousing of the revelation of Willy's PTSD. The most important of them include Biff's being back home and Willy's terrible memories that take him to despair. To stand upon the main reasons by which Willy suffers and by them he longs to escape his reality too much, Miller admits:

The struggles in *Death of a Salesman* were simply between father and son for recognition and forgiveness But when it extends itself out of the family circle and into society, it broaches those questions of social status, social honor and recognition... . For Willy's ... the blow struck ... was struck outside the home rather than within it- which is to say that it reflects us more because it is social fact we are witnessing [qtd. in 28, p.94].

Weales assumes that *Death of a Salesman* is a tragedy about Biff. He states "it is Biff's story ... it is a play about a son's troubles with his father" [25,p.xvii]. He also indicates that this salesman is a sufferer of his self- delusion [25,p.xvii]. During the play Biff realizes that difference between the illusions he is brought up on and the reality he now must face. He is finally determined enough to tell his father what he has learned during a father –son talk that turns into all out argument:

No! Nobody's hanging himself, Willy! I ran flights with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped ... I looked at the pen and said to myself, What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, I say I know who I am! Pop! I'm I dime a dozen, and so are you! I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You

were never anything but a hard-working ... I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home [21, II, p.96].

In Willy's state of nervous breakdown, past and present are intermingled. The protagonist has neither the courage of Ben, nor the competence of Charley, or the respect of Singleman. He feels he has to talk to himself because he has nobody else to talk to about his failure in life. He cannot invoke his feelings even in Linda, as he does not want to annoy her neither he can talk to Biff or Happy, as they both think that he is insane [27].

This traumatized man is seeking to show to himself and to the outside world his value as a person, and, thus, he can gain what he wants. At times, he looks to the future and thinks he can still achieve it. For instance, he has the dream of having a big spectacular funeral. But, at the end when Willy died, at his funeral, Linda says, "why didn't anybody come...Where are all the people he knew?" [21, Requiem, p. 106]. This explains that, in all his life, he holds on to this fantasy, and he never faces the reality. It is his vision of the people of the past that leads him to follow a particular path, leading to his demise in the end.

Committing suicide to Willy is not a matter of escape, but for reasons of great importance including: he has lost his job, and with it, his last source of self-worth; his sons have not become the successful businessmen yet; his favorite son, Biff, has proclaimed himself and his father to be failures. As a result, he finds no way except his death [29]. One can see that every character in the play, in one way or another, activates Willy to his inevitable death. Charley, for instance, with his generosity, increases the salesman's sense of his own worthlessness. Biff, from another angle, with his denouncement of his father, destroys his illusion that his son admires and respects him. Howard's cruel act of his employment is the final blow since the salesperson begins to see after being fired that his life is without any meaning. Ben, in his good chance and quick results to obtain fortune, reveals his frequent failure in life. In comparison with himself, Singleman's role is regarded as a representative of his belief of being well-liked and everything will be opened. He is finally ready to commit a suicide. Perhaps, as Clurman suggests, Willy disobeys or misunderstands his responsibility and prepares for his death [30].

It is the irony of fate that Willy's two sons for whom he sacrificed his life refer to their father as a dreamer. For instance, Biff says that his father had "all the wrong dreams", whereas Happy indicates that he "had a good dream... to come out number-one man" [21, p.105].

3. Conclusion

The Psychoanalysis of *Death of a Salesman* in terms of Caruth's PTSD reflects that the study achieves the proposed questions upon which this paper is built. Here, Willy Loman is an epitome of the main principles of the theorist's theory PTSD. Then, there is a close connection between this literary work and the adopted theory. This traumatized person faces a complex suffering disorder in which the past is always presented in him through his disturbed memory of the traumatic events. His symptoms of PTSD are felt in his reliving a horrible event through flashbacks and life dreams. He seems to experience the disorder and lives the traumatic experience within his memory.

The paper also shows that Willy's sad ending by committing suicide is the result of his historical trauma that is repressed in his inner psychic and revealed later when there is no improvement to his disordered mind. This is clear in his inability to come out of the world of illusion. As a defensive mechanism, he realizes that his only escape from the suffering of life is suicide. Eventually, anxiety and depression that the protagonist indulges with accompany his traumatic experiences and determine his decision to end his life.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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